

## Participatory Photography for Monitoring and Evaluation Nile Basin Development Challenge

Beth Cullen  
2012

Photography can be a powerful way of communicating information. Participatory photography refers to a process whereby participants are supported to generate their own photographic work. As part of the NBDC project cameras will be given to innovation platform members (IP) in each of the study sites: Jeldu, Diga and Fogera. These cameras will provide a means for IP members in each of the sites to capture the dynamics of the innovation process, particularly the pilot interventions, as they happen. The resulting photographs can be used for joint learning and reflection by IP members, they can be used to communicate opportunities and challenges to researchers and members of the wider NBDC project, and may be turned into 'photo films' to share key lessons to people beyond the NBDC sites, including farmers, researchers and policy makers.

An 'M&E champion' will be selected by innovation platform members to oversee monitoring and evaluation activities, including use of the camera. This person should be someone who is regularly in 'the field' and interacts closely with farmers (i.e. Development Agent). The 'M&E champion' will be responsible for distributing the camera and notebooks to selected farmers involved in piloting the fodder interventions, and teaching them how to use the camera to take the photographs.

### How often should photographs be taken?

Participants should document their activities at a minimum on a monthly basis and make sure that any significant activities are photographed. Photographs should be taken at regular intervals to make sure that they capture how the interventions develop over time.

### What will be photographed?

We hope that the photographs will capture:

- **What** fodder is planted
- **Where** the fodder is planted
- Preparation and management **practices**
- **Interactions** with other actors
- Fodder **growth** through the seasons
- **Utilization** of fodder
- Any **problems** that are encountered

### How will the photographs be used?

Photographs will be collected on a regular basis for presentation to IP members for analysis and discussion. The photographs may also be used as a basis for follow-up interviews to capture stories of significant change. Copies will be used by IWMI/ILRI researchers for publicity and information sharing with communities and stakeholders in other parts of Ethiopia. The photographs may be used to make 'digital stories' for wider sharing on the ILRI/IWMI/CPWF website. IP members are free to use the photographs as they see fit.

## **Ownership of camera and photographs**

The camera is provided by ILRI/IWMI to IP members on a loan basis for the period of the project. The cameras are given with the understanding that they will be returned to ILRI/IWMI in good condition once the project ends.

Photographs taken with the camera are the property of project participants, IP members and ILRI/IWMI researchers. Hard copies of selected photographs will be printed and returned to the photographers on request.

## **Who takes the photographs?**

The aim is to use the cameras as a **participatory** M&E tool, they should therefore be given to farmers/community members participating in the piloted activities so they can take an active role in the M&E process. It is very important that they are given this opportunity, regardless of social/economic status or education/literacy levels.

## **Who will coordinate activities?**

The 'M&E coordinator' assigned by the IP can instruct the participants in how to use the camera using the simple guide below. They will also be responsible for overseeing the process and collecting photographs in time for IP meetings. The M&E coordinator will play a key role in ensuring that participants have an equal chance to use the camera, which will involve making sure that the camera is shared between participants in an equitable and timely manner.

ILRI/IWMI researchers can be contacted for support and assistance if necessary.

## How to take pictures with a digital camera

### STEPS

#### 1. Familiarize yourself with the camera



#### 2. Find the 'on' button on top of the camera and press it. Wait for it to turn on and load.



#### 3. Put settings on 'Auto' for easy use



4. Look into LCD screen on back of camera and aim the camera at your target



5. Zoom in or out by turning left or right



6. Find the  
top right of



photo button at  
the camera

7. Once the target is on the screen as you want it, hold the camera still, press and hold the button until the camera 'clicks'



8. View your picture using the 'playback' button on the back of the camera





9. To charge the camera open the battery cover at the bottom of the camera



10. Remove the battery and then close the cover



**11. Place the battery in the charger provided. Make sure the arrows line up.**



**12. Plug the charger into a socket. A red light will appear when the battery is charging. When the battery is full this will turn to green.**



**Remember the aim is to...**



**Hand over control of the camera!**



**Capture important events and lessons!**